

Quick Facts for Young People about Alcohol and other Drugs



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Quick Facts for Young People about Alcohol and Other Drugs

There are over 11 million children of alcohol or drug addicted parents in the United States under the age of 18. You probably hear all the time about people with alcoholic parents being more likely to be alcoholics, too. The same goes for drugs. This makes it sound like it's inevitable, but here's what you almost never hear: **you can stop it from happening to you.**

If your parents or other family members have problems with alcohol or drug use, it doesn't mean you will too -- if you take control. If you learn as much as you can about addiction and what it's all about, you will be able to make smarter choices for yourself. Ask an adult you trust, like a teacher or school counselor, to help you find an expert you can talk to. And check out this website:

<http://www.health.org/nacoa/kidspage.htm>

Smoking:

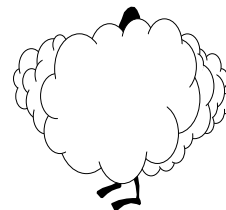


Smoking puts dangerous chemicals into your body while it is developing and changing. Every single cigarette has over 4,000 chemicals (including 200 known poisons) that can affect your growing process in a bad way. **Cigarettes are also highly addictive**, both mentally and physically. Experimenting with smoking could lead to full-fledged addiction and a lifetime of trying to quit. One-third of young people who are just experimenting end up being addicted by the time they are 20.

Marijuana:

Marijuana clouds your thinking and your judgment.

Marijuana makes people more likely to do things they might regret later on. More kids are hurt in car crashes and are victims of violence when they use marijuana than when they are straight. In addition, marijuana reduces coordination and concentration. It is harder to do things -- like sports, dancing, acting, and studying. Keep in mind that marijuana is illegal. **Using, holding, buying, or selling it can get you suspended or expelled from school, and even jail time.**



Marijuana use by teens goes down!

Every year the University of Michigan does a national study called Monitoring the Future. The last three years, this study found that **use of marijuana among teens has declined** or leveled off. This is good news! Many of you have gotten the message that using marijuana can cause problems and hurt you and those you care about.

Crack and Cocaine:



Just one hit of crack or cocaine can kill you because it can cause heart attacks, strokes, or breathing problems. Crack and cocaine use is also linked to car crashes, falls, burns, drowning, and suicide. They are stimulants that tend to give a temporary illusion of limitless power and energy but leave the user feeling depressed, edgy, and craving more. Crack and cocaine are both very addictive. This addiction can ruin your physical and mental health and can become so strong that these drugs dominate all aspects of your life.

Inhalants:

Inhalant use destroys the cells and nasal passages which filter the pollutants that go up your nose when you breathe. This can cause some nasty problems with your nose.

Inhalants, a group of chemicals found in home items such as aerosols and cleaning solvents, are sniffed or huffed by users to get an immediate head rush or high. In addition to messing up your nose, **inhalant abuse can cause liver, lung, and kidney problems, brain and nervous system damage, and even death.**

Hallucinogens:



Want a trip? Go to a museum or zoo! Hallucinogens like **LSD and PCP can change the chemistry in your brain!** And you might do things that you would never dream of doing in an unaltered state of mind.

The reason the drugs are named hallucinogens is because they distort how people perceive reality. We all know the names of the most well-known hallucinogens: PCP

(also known as phencyclidine); angel dust, or loveboat; LSD (also called lysergic acid diethylamide or acid); mescaline and peyote; and psilocybin, or "magic" mushrooms.

Under the influence of hallucinogens, you can lose your sense of direction, distance, and time. **The effects of LSD are unpredictable.** Users report feeling several different emotions at once or swinging rapidly from one emotion to another. The drugs can even produce delusions and visual hallucinations. **Some people who take LSD report experiencing severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings,** fear of losing control, fear of insanity and death, and despair. It's no accident that some **people have died while under the influence of LSD.** If you want to change your mind, read a book, go to a movie, or talk with a friend.

Alcohol:

Even though **alcohol is illegal to buy or possess if you are under 21,** it is the drug most frequently abused by young people.

Alcohol sends your ability to drive downhill and you don't need to drink much to affect your driving in a bad way. Some driving skills -- such as steering a car while responding to changes in traffic -- can be impaired by blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) as low as 0.02 percent. The BAC refers to the amount of alcohol in the blood. For most people, it only takes one drink to get this **BAC. Staying away from alcohol is the only way to be safe behind the wheel.** Driving is a huge privilege -- respect it!



Alcohol-related crashes are the second leading cause of teen death. And, alcohol use is often linked with teen deaths by drowning, fires, suicide and homicide. It is important to get the facts right. One 12-ounce beer has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of whiskey or a 5-ounce glass of wine. Wine coolers look like juice sparklers but they have just as much alcohol as a 12-ounce beer. One glass of clear malt can give a teenager a .02 on a breathalyzer test. In some States, that amount is enough for anyone under the age of 21 to lose his/her driver's license and be subject to a fine.

Party Clean and Sober!



Communities across the country are doing alcohol-free events created by kids for kids. Young people know what to do to help themselves and each other, and be not only part of but leaders in building great communities. Being a strong person will help you when faced with the many factors and influences that might impact your decision to drink or not drink. The strongest influences might be the attitudes and actions of your friends, peers, and community. *Get involved!*

Prescription Drugs:

Ritalin - forget about it! **Taking a prescription drug that was not prescribed for you is dangerous.** Some kids may sell their Ritalin or give it away to friends. Ritalin is prescribed for specific health issues that some people need medication in order to handle. If you have not been prescribed Ritalin, you should not take it. **When Ritalin is abused (and injected or snorted), the ingredients in the drug can cause blood clots, infections, scars, burning of nasal tissues, open sores, and skin and circulatory problems.**



Ecstasy:



Ecstasy? Not exactly! Just skip it! **Ecstasy can fry your circuit board.** A recent study found that people who take the drug Ecstasy, or MDMA, can have ongoing problems in remembering what they see and hear. **Young people who try this drug have lots of problems with their brains** -- the drug damages it and interferes with normal learning and memory. These problems continue weeks after they stop taking it.

LSD

Past use of LSD decreased among 8th graders -- from 1.5 percent in 1997 to 1.1 percent in 1998 --and it stayed at 1.1 percent in 1999.

Heroin:

Heroin use has leveled off. The last three years have seen heroin use level off in users in eighth to twelfth grades. **Heroin is dangerous in any form.** It is extremely addictive and rehab to get off heroin is a long and painful process. It's not worth putting yourself at risk by trying it!

GHB

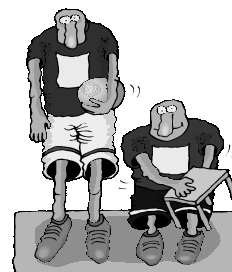


Don't get invited to the ER - and GHB can send you there in a hurry. GHB is usually an odorless, colorless, and nearly tasteless liquid that is often used with alcohol. Sometimes it is also taken in the form of a powder or a capsule. Taking this drug can cause you to vomit, become drowsy and dizzy, or even have seizures. After excessive use, some people have lost consciousness and have had a hard time breathing. The EMTs take them right to the ER. You can't party if you're in a coma!

Steroids:

Steroids can end up permanently stunting your growth!

People generally take steroids because they want to be bigger and stronger than they are naturally. Yes, steroids can make your muscles grow. But, steroid use also causes acne, trembling, higher blood pressure, reproductive system problems, yellow skin, bloating, and liver problems. In children and young adults, **steroids can damage the growth areas at the ends of bones, which can make the bones stop growing.** You get one body-it's got to last your whole life.



If you want to be a star athlete you have to do the work - **NO SHORTCUTS!** Exercise builds strength and endurance. A well-balanced diet and rest build stability, health, and mental sharpness. Chemicals aren't needed. Athletic excellence is achieved by millions of people without relying on dangerous drugs!